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An Analysis of the function of lead types as found in the musicals : My fair lady and Sweeney Todd

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**An analysis of the function of lead types as round in the
musicals: "My Fair Lady" and "Sweeney Todd"**

Bradshaw, Kevin Thomas Clifford, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1989

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTION OF LEAD
TYPES AS FOUND IN THE MUSICALS:
MY FAIR LADY AND SWEENEY TODD

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theater Arts
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Function of Lead

Types Found in the Musicals:

My Fair Lady and Sweeney Todd

by Kevin T. C. Bradshaw

This thesis analyzes the function of the primary leads and secondary leads found in the two musicals, My Fair Lady and Sweeney Todd. It examines the particular function of the lead types; identifying primary lead status and secondary lead status, to determine the function of each particular lead category.

Research on this subject centers around two theorists, Erving Goffman and Michel Foucault. By taking these two contrasting sociologists and their respective theories, a language has been developed to assist the actor in finding new methods of research and approach to characters they might portray.

Information developed by applying the social theories of Goffman, and the theories of dominance and language/power structures of Foucault, has led to new ways of looking at the text of the musical and the function of the lead types as they pertain to the text. These discoveries offer endless possibilities and perhaps new ways of looking at theater as we know it today.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The message of role theory is that the individual perceives the structure of his society through roles he expects people to play; and that he identifies with his community by his choice of roles to play. Drama is, of course, entirely concerned with the artificial construction of roles.¹

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.²

These statements, the first by J.S.R. Goodlad, sociologist, and the second by Michel Foucault, social scientist, offer contrasting opinions on how power is structured, through role relationships in the first example and through individuals in the second. These statements lay the foundation for the subsequent application and testing of these two theories.

The subject of this thesis is an analysis of the relationship between the second lead character and the primary lead character types. This study involves a

theoretical and practical application of these theories done by selecting scenes from two contrasting musicals, My Fair Lady and Sweeney Todd.

The basis for this research was determined by looking at the contrast that naturally occurs between lead character types and then applying a rationale that the actor might utilize during any given character study. A study of these two plays, with their contrasting and varied themes and styles, will allow the actor to see that these theories can be used in his/her own situation with any other play he/she studies. Additionally, these plays offer a wide variety of choices which the actor must be able to identify for him/herself.

This study involves an initial review of social role theory as espoused by Erving Goffman, a noted sociologist and leader in the field of role theory. An analysis of power relations between social forms found in the discourse of the play is presented based on the writings and theories of Michel Foucault.

My Fair Lady and Sweeney Todd have been selected for analysis because of the contrasting themes and variety of character types found in their respective dramas. Both musicals have many things in common, however. The most important bond they have is that they both come from a medium which has a popular appeal, the musical.

The musical can be called a middle class discourse. It is a form of entertainment by and for the middle class audience. The musical is found as a staple amongst other forms of entertainment unique to other forms of theater offered to different class structures within society. The vitality of the contemporary musical theater comes from a noncommercial source -- the continuous recognition by generations of audiences that the materials, forms, and styles of the musical developed out of lessons learned in everyday life. These lessons stem from the intimate relationship a musical show establishes with its live and responsive public. Musical theater is a theater of the people. It gives to an audience, but takes from it, too.³

It is understood then, that the musical theater is an art form for the middle class, with middle class values embedded in the discourse of the musical itself. These values are transmitted by the characters themselves and the actions they perform. The roles that are portrayed (for example, Henry Higgins = professor, or Eliza Doolittle = flower shop girl) are examined using Goffman's theories of role relationships. For Foucault, the important thing is the relations of dominance that occur between situations within the play itself, i.e. Judge Turpin and his dominance over Fleet Street society, London. These are a few examples of how these theories can deal with the discourse of the

musical theater and offer the actor a different method of approach when analyzing lead character types'.

The relations of dominance are the key to Foucault's theories. They govern the existence of the power struggle that naturally occurs between the second lead and the primary lead. What is interesting to note is that this type of study offers an alternative to methods of understanding that actors have commonly taken in the past. Normally, an actor will take a character and study it for its "history" or "heritage," "character traits" or "commonality." By analyzing a character's relationship with other elements in the play, namely the music and the text itself, the actor will gain further insight into his/her own character. It is important for an actor to have an analytical background as well as a theatrical base in order for the performer to fully encompass the meaning and the workings of that particular character he/she is performing.

Foucault speaks of obtaining knowledge through the study of the discourse of any given subject. The musical theater is a middle class discourse. The elements that make up this middle class discourse are complex, but can be better understood when categorized in the order of their application based on these theories. This examination involves looking at the relations of dominance, specifically between the second lead and the primary lead, and how that relationship is portrayed throughout the musical. This

study, utilizing Foucault's theories, deals with the types of songs that are sung, the quality and meanings of the lines spoken, a quantitative review of the number of songs and lines the character has, and it reviews how these elements contribute to the relations of dominance between the primary leads and the second leads in each scene.

Foucault captures the meaning of the study of discourse when he states,

We are not to burrow to the hidden core of discourse, to the heart of the thoughts or meaning manifested in it; instead, taking the discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, that we should look for its external conditions of existence, for that which gives rise to the chance series of these events and fixes its limits.⁴

The "individuals of power," as referred to by Foucault, mainly those that exert power via dominance over one another, function in a similar fashion to that of societal role types, or role relationships (to be studied when Goffman is introduced). These individuals do not represent the atypical relationship established between one man and another, one on one, but rather, they represent the relationship society has in general and the effect power in that society (or the societal framework) has on the individual. An example of "societal framework" can be found in the musical Sweeney Todd, with all the constraints presented within that musical; music, setting, character, dialogue, story, etc. The effect upon the individual

characters, specifically lead types, can be studied when applying Foucault's theories.

The societal elements of the musical, therefore, are the constraints handed to the second lead character through the dialogue and the songs, and the quantity of both that are given to this character type. These societal elements, (music and dialogue) or "norms of the musical discourse," are the elements of power employed by the individual characters. The actor is therefore reminded of his/her function when Foucault states, "the individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, it is the element of its articulation."⁵

Role analysis, the second theory utilized in this paper, focuses on the patterns or systems arising from the integration of roles. It is a basic assumption of role analysis that each individual will be involved in more than one system or pattern and, therefore, perform more than one role.⁶ These "systems or patterns" mean role interaction and relationships, which are dominant throughout each scene examined in this paper.

The primary lead character type, as discussed in this paper, serves as the mirror or sounding board for the second lead. Its function or definition is to act as the overall nucleus of the story/central theme of the musical. Also known as the protagonist, he/she presents images, plots, or

scripts that guide group activity or whose role is central for the illusion/drama of the play.

The second lead character serves as the interactive unit of character type that actually dominates the structure of the majority of character types found in the musical. Since all action and movement of relationships are dependent or interdependent upon that of the second lead character, a study of the function of his/her role relationship towards other lead types is important.

Role analysis focuses on the patterns or systems arising from the integration of roles. The primary leads and the secondary leads all relate to one another and often times depend upon their interaction to realize their own character situations. Each relationship can be found to encompass many "faces" such as with the character Sweeney, from the musical Sweeney Todd. Sweeney must put on the face of a friend with Anthony, who has rescued and befriended him, to the face of pretence towards Judge Turpin, where he must disguise himself in order to lure him to his death as revenge for the rape of his wife and taking of his only daughter, Johanna. This example shows just a sampling of character "faces" that Sweeney must undertake throughout the play.

For Goffman, a character's relationship with other characters depends upon the expected and unexpected action of that character. Normative elements exist within any

relationship. These elements, defined below, determine how that character is going to interact with his/her opposite character or other characters in the play. It is through mutual activity and responses between characters that the normative elements are realized. Once realized, the actor can apply that which he/she knows to be true and portray that character with more of an in-depth approach. The character's normative actions are determined by his/her own expected actions based on what the character represents to the other role types within the play.

These normative elements - obligations, in terms of an action of his own that he or others legitimately demand he perform are also known as expectations, actions of others that he or they can legitimately insist upon.⁷

These "norms" are determined by what the actor finds in his/her own study of that character. They cannot be assumed to exist with any preconceived notions prior to entering into the role being portrayed. The norms must come from the action and interaction that occurs between the characters and the roles they portray. Naturally, the framework for these norms come from the author's intent on what he/she wants out of that character. The actor must find those normative elements him/herself in order to effectively analyze and play the part.

An example of a character's "normative action" might be found in Tobias' obligation towards Mrs. Lovett, in Sweeney

Todd. As her servant, he is expected to perform a service to her, in return for her "kindness and gentility." He does so, not only because he has to but because he is expected to due to his position in society. This approach is an effective tool when the actor is studying his/her character. It is also important when looking at any role, since it is those expected actions that determine the interplay between other character types and consequently, lead type (primary/secondary) determination.

According to Goffman:

A ROLE consists of the activity the incumbent (character) would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position.⁸

The individual's role enactment occurs largely through a cycle of face-to-face social situations with role-others, that is, relevant audiences.⁹ These role-others are the other characters found in the play itself. The duties and responsibilities of each particular role type determines the relationship and responses that the primary leads will have with the secondary leads. These duties and responsibilities are the ingredients that make up the social structure of action and interaction that take place between lead types. According to A. Paul Hare, a role is learned as part of a set of roles that have mutual obligations in the form of rights and duties, or more generally, "expectations."¹⁰

The focus of this study is on the relationships found between the primary lead (hero, protagonist) and the secondary lead (support characters, confidants, servants, friends etc.) There is a fluctuation between the many relationships that occur between character types, and often times the actions of one character might not fit the norms that are expected; i.e. Eliza = Flower girl, is also Eliza = duchess at the ball.

Goffman offers as support for this:

Where there is a normative framework for a given role, we can expect that the complex forces at play upon individuals in the relevant position will ensure that typical role will depart to some degree from the normative model, despite the tendency in social life to transform what is usually done to what ought to be done.¹¹

It is relationships that determine conflict, and situations within these conflicts, in turn, create the specific delineation between the primary lead and the secondary lead.

These situations and behavior patterns are what make up the relationships between the character types in the musical. The examination of role theory and discourse, enables the actor to understand his/her position in the societal framework established by situation, behavior and relationships.

Another element of Goffman's role theory involves an understanding of a few more terms commonly used in this application. Concerning "status" and "role" Goffman states:

A "status" is a position in some system or pattern of positions and is related to the other positions in the unit through reciprocal ties, through rights and duties binding on the incumbents.

He states further:

"Role" consists of the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position.¹²

The term "status," as it relates to the status of primary lead and second lead, and to the musical, is new to this study of role theory. It ties in, however, with the previous discussion by Hare on the "rights and duties" of the characters, these also being referred to as societal "expectations." These rights and duties are given to both the primary lead and the second lead by the playwright who set up the relationships that occur between the lead types.

The demands given to an individual character serves as a common arena for analysis, allowing the actor the opportunity to pose questions about the normative elements concerning his/her own particular character. This questioning process enables the actor to understand his/her character's position in society (the society presented within the framework of the musical), thus enabling him/her to understand the lead type that the actor is portraying.

Drama serves to sharpen the individual's consciousness of roles, thus his awareness of the structure of his society.¹³

The following chapters involve application and testing of the theories of Foucault and Goffman. Chapters 2 and 3 will analyze the theories as they pertain to the musical My Fair Lady. These chapters will include direct theoretical examples and applications of their theories. Chapter 4 is an experiment in taking these theories, combining them, and analyzing Sweeney in a more practical application. Both theories will be used simultaneously to show that the theories can be tested side by side.

The appendix includes a series of graphs and charts that illustrate the various patterns developed when taking Foucault and Goffman's theories and applying them. These charts are broken down into three categories of research. The first series of graphs plot out the patterns that result when a comparison is made between the two shows and the number of songs sung per character. The second set of graphs illustrates the relationships that occur between the characters in each play, demonstrating any overlap, consistency or fluctuation between the two shows in terms of the character relationships that occur. The third chart includes a central graph that is numbered by act and scene on one line and charts the total number of lines and dialogue each character has within each respective play. These charts plot out the significant fluctuations which

occur among individual character lead-types and reflect patterns that exist between these two seemingly disparate musicals.

The following chapters include the research and analysis that has led to these discoveries.

CHAPTER 2

Foucault : Relations of Dominance

Act I, scene i - My Fair Lady:

Dialogue = how dialogue (text) itself separates second leads and primary leads - highlighting the relations of dominance.

On the social appropriation of discourse, Foucault states,

Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse.¹⁴

This statement seems to epitomize the theme of My Fair Lady, in that My Fair Lady deals directly with the subject of power through the acquisition of knowledge. The first scene sets up the situations that present themselves throughout the rest of the play, establishing the theme and direction of how the play is going to proceed. This scene will be used as the primary example in this chapter when testing the two theories of Foucault and Goffman.

The first time we hear Eliza Doolittle speak in the play is the very first line, "Aaaooowww!" She has just been accidentally knocked down by Freddy Eynsford-Hill, a character whose purpose is seemingly only to serve as the

guy in the chorus who bumps into Eliza at the start of the play. This is interesting to note because of his function later on in the play as a minor rival to Henry Higgins.

Eliza's dialogue interaction with Freddy, Pickering, and the bystanders in the crowd during the initial stages of Act one, scene i, establishes an appearance of second lead status for Eliza. In review, the second lead character serves as the interactive unit of character type which dominates the majority of character types found in the musical. Eliza's character initially interacts with Pickering and Higgins at the same level as the rest of the chorus members at the beginning of the play. Her dialogue points out the same fears and values felt by the bystanders in the chorus.

The initial meeting of the central characters involves a simple study on the part of the primary male character, Henry Higgins, concerning languages and unique accents. In the beginning, we find Eliza Doolittle peddling flowers from her basket in front of the opera house. She is shabbily dressed and she looks as though she has not bathed in months.

Higgins is discovered hiding behind a pillar, taking down notes and observing all the action occurring in the scene. A general distrust of him is felt by all the buskers and bystanders in the crowd, who think that he is a

detective, but soon his real purpose for being there is discovered.

Higgins is a professor of language and accents. Eliza's obvious lack of language skills is just one of the many observances Higgins makes but it is important that the ensuing exchange of dialogue between Higgins, Eliza, and the bystanders take place in order to set up the separation of power between the two and the rest of the ensemble.

For example:

ELIZA

(Springing up terrified) I ain't done nothin' wrong by speakin' to the gentleman! I've a right to sell flowers if I keep off the kerb. I'm a respectable girl; so help me, I never spoke to him except to ask him to buy a flower off me.

(There is a general hubbub, mostly sympathetic to ELIZA)

ANOTHER BYSTANDER

What's the row?

A HOXTON MAN

What's all the bloomin' noise?

A SELSEY MAN

There's a tec takin' her down.

ELIZA

(Crying wildly - to PICKERING) Oh, sir, don't let him charge me! You dunno what it means to me. They'll take away my character and drive me on the streets for speakin' to gentlemen.

(PROFESSOR HIGGINS pivots around the post and into view)

HIGGINS

There! There! There! Who's hurting you, you silly girl! What do you take me for?¹⁵

This exchange is the first direct contact of dialogue between Eliza and Higgins. The sense of power between the two is self evident in the fear displayed by Eliza's reaction to Higgins' note taking.

The other item to observe is the interaction which takes place between Higgins and the other "common" folk. The initial dialogue which takes place throughout most of this section of scene one has Eliza speaking and interacting with her own people. The important aspect of this action is the manner in which she is portrayed with her own people and the idea that at this moment, her interaction with Higgins is no different than the rest of the chorus members' relationship with him as well. The level of interaction that occurs between lead types is a key when determining lead status (primary vs. secondary).

This variable enables the actor/actress to understand fully about the character that is being portraying. Even though the assumption is made that Eliza Doolittle is the main female lead of My Fair Lady, the actor must first be aware of the fact that Eliza has an underlying role status that must first be recognized. This is important in order to make the transformation of Eliza into the primary female

lead believable and understandable. This can be done using the following method that works not only for this play or scene but can work in any application.

Eliza possesses second lead character traits by the very fact that she appears to be one of the "rest of the chorus" at the outset of the play, even though prior knowledge of this show gives the actor the knowledge that Eliza is the primary female lead of My Fair Lady. It is equally important for the actress to recognize the "second lead nature" of Eliza as a sub-textual aspect of her character. Through this process of revealing the textual and quantitative aspects of the discourse, the actor/actress develops a deeper understanding of the roles he/she portrays. As a reminder, the primary lead functions as the presenter of story line and plot whose role it is to guide the focus of the drama.

To establish a method of determining how the discourse reveals the relationships of dominance within the musical, a quantitative accounting of the number of lines each character speaks is the first thing that must be done.

In this example, scene i, of My Fair Lady has the following line-count breakdown:

(In order of appearance)		
Eliza	=	26
Freddy	=	2
Mrs. Eynsford-Hill	=	2
Pickering	=	19
Chorus	=	17
Higgins	=	22

Keeping in mind the amount of lines Eliza and Higgins speak, (26 and 22 respectively), the actor must look at the amount of dialogue within those lines as well. Without counting word for word, it is evident, by comparing the amount of information presented in each line spoken by Eliza and Higgins versus Pickering or the chorus members, that they are in fact the primary leads of the play. This is true because the more a character speaks and the more he/she says within those lines spoken, the more information is transmitted. Another way of looking at this is to formulate this thought: Lines + Volume of dialogue + information w/in the dialogue = lead status. This supports the evidence found in scene one which contains the central dialogue dominated by two characters, Eliza and Higgins.

In addition to the line-count, the actors must be aware of an accounting of songs sung within the scene, as well as in the entire play, in order to round out the accounting process of scene study used in this theory. In scene one, Eliza has one song, her "I am" song, "Wouldn't It Be Lovely?." The "I am" song establishes essential character traits that the audience needs in order to develop an understanding of that particular character. "Lovely" establishes Eliza's wishes to better herself from the life she currently leads and gives us a taste of events that will soon occur in her life that will transform her and elevate her to full primary lead status.

An example of this is found directly in the lyrics themselves:

ELIZA

All I want is a room somewhere,
Far away from the cold night air;
With one enormous chair...
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely?

Lots of choc'late for me to eat;
Lots of coal makin' lots of heat;
Warm face, warm hands, warm feet...!
Oh, wouldn't it be lovely?¹⁶

Higgins himself has his primary "I am" song at the very beginning of the play as well. His song "Why Can't the English?" occurs at a moment in scene one when his assertion of power over Eliza (whom we have observed as having second lead traits) is essential in setting up the levels of domination that will factor in his character development. This song, which occurs prior to Eliza's in the scene, reveals condemnation and an attitude of superiority over not only Eliza, but the other individuals who are of the lower class society that he has been observing.

The following are a few examples of the lyrics in "Why Can't" that reveal Higgins' assertion of power over those less "educated" than he:

HIGGINS

Look at her - a pris'ner of the gutters;
Condemned by ev'ry syllable she utters.

By right she should be taken out and hung
For the cold-blooded murder of the English tongue!

ELIZA

A-o-o-o-w!

HIGGINS (Imitating her)

Aooooow! Heavens, what a noise!
This is what the British population
Calls an element'ry education.¹⁷

Higgins dominates this portion of scene one because the function of this song is to reveal Higgins' attitude towards the other characters in this scene. When thinking of Eliza's possible second lead status and placing her next to the other character types in this portion of the scene, the level of domination that Higgins asserts functions perfectly.

Once the line/dialogue count has been revealed, the actor can recognize the separation of power between the play's two central leads (Eliza and Higgins) and the rest of the secondary lead types. This is consistent with Foucault's ideas on establishing new methodology to determine levels of power/domination.

Foucault states:

... the important thing is not to attempt some kind of deduction of power starting from its center and aimed at the discovery of the extent to which it permeates into the base, of the degree to which it reproduces itself down to and including the most molecular elements of society. One must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history...¹⁸

The separation that occurs between primary lead types and secondary lead types must contain a greater amount of these elements over the other, revealing the level of domination between lead types in general. The sums contained within scene one, for example, create the existence of a division of power that exists between the primary leads and the secondary leads. Eliza and Higgins dominate the line/dialogue count in this scene and are the focus of the scene and therefore, are the primary leads of My Fair Lady. The rest of the characters in the scene are secondary in that they serve to respond to the multitude of dialogue the primary leads present.

Pickering, for example, has 19 lines compared to Eliza's 26 and Higgins' 22. His dialogue volume, however, reveals a second lead status in that the lower volume of lines is in direct proportion with the lesser function of those lines. Pickering responds in short dialogue spurts of questions and comments at the dialogue interaction that occurs between the two primary leads, Eliza and Higgins. This activity occurs throughout the play and is Pickering's primary function as a second lead.

For example,

HIGGINS

(Eagerly) Are you? Do you know Colonel
Pickering, the author of Spoken Sanskrit?

PICKERING

I am Colonel Pickering. Who are you?

HIGGINS

Henry Higgins, author of Higgins' Universal Alphabet.

PICKERING (amazed)

I came from India to meet you!¹⁹

Foucault reveals his thoughts on how the individual (in this case the characters in the play), functions as the key to his theory. His clarification applies to the understanding that each individual character effects his/her own level of power over the scope of the discourse. The discourse is guided by the elements of the text, dialogue, music and character.

The discourse of the musical would not be realized without the essential action of the individual character to act as the articulator of that particular discourse.

Foucault advises that:

... the individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation.²⁰

It is important for the actor/actress to recognize the difference between the major scenes and the minor "I am" type scenes. This will help diffuse any confusion that might occur when a second lead character might dominate one particular scene, merely because he/she is the focus of that scene.

The dialogue spoken by Eliza and Higgins contains the central storytelling information important to propel the drama forward. The dialogue spoken by lesser character types (second leads and chorus) contains the responses to the actions of the primary leads. When there is a specific scene that simply serves to reveal a character, the assertion of power and levels of domination do not become major factors.

When the sole purpose of the scene is to focus on a particular character, be it primary or secondary, the volume of what is said or the amount of lines counted between lead types is insignificant in determining lead status. When the scene becomes a singular character focus "I am" type scene, the lead status level of character may not be revealed because the focus becomes a singular one and may not indicate any sort of separation of power/dominance between character types.

Take for example Act one, scene ii:

This scene focuses on Alfred P. Doolittle's introduction as one of the secondary lead characters in this musical. This is his "I am" scene where he interacts with his buddies Jamie and Harry and also speaks to Eliza. Doolittle's "I am" song is the famous "With A Little Bit of Luck," sung with his two friends. This song establishes for the actor who portrays Doolittle, the sense of direction and attitude towards life this character is to possess.

An example of some of the lyrics in Doolittle's "I am" piece:

DOOLITTLE

Oh, you can walk the straight and narrow;
But with a little bit of luck
You'll run amuck!

The gentle sex was made for man to marry,
To share his nest and see his food is cooked.
The gentle sex was made for man to marry - but
With a little bit of luck,
With a little bit of luck,
You can have it all and not get hooked.²¹

In this scene, Doolittle's second lead character is revealed through a series of interactive encounters with his drinking buddies and Eliza. Even though analysis of scene one proves that Eliza is an important character, scene two would not indicate that she is a primary lead, by Foucault's definition, with the amount and type of dialogue interaction that occurs between herself and Doolittle. Take for example the following series of lines:

DOOLITTLE

Thanks for your hospitality, George. Send the bill to Buckingham Palace. Hyde Park to walk through on a fine spring night; the whole ruddy city of London to roam about in sellin' her bloomin' flowers. I give her all that, and then I disappears and leaves her on her own to enjoy it. Now if that ain't worth half a crown now and again, I'll take off my belt and give her what for.

JAMIE

You got a good heart Alfie, but if you want that half a crown from Eliza, you better have a good story to go with it.
(ELIZA ambles on)

DOOLITTLE (With paternal joy)

Eliza! What a surprise!

ELIZA (Walking past him)

Not a brass farthing!

DOOLITTLE (Grabbing her arm)

Now you look here, Eliza. You wouldn't have the heart to send me home to your stepmother without a bit of liquid protection, now would you?

ELIZA

Stepmother. Ha! Stepmother, indeed!²²

In this scene (two), Doolittle has six speaking lines compared to one for Jamie, one for Harry and four for Eliza. With this line count, it could be assumed that Doolittle is a primary lead and that Eliza, Jamie and Harry all have secondary or even chorus status. This is why it is important to differentiate between a character revealing "I am" type of scene and that of a central story-telling scene. The theories of power/knowledge and domination as espoused by Foucault do not focus on the "I am" scenes because the scope of the scene's purpose of individual story telling does call for this application.

The evaluation of line count content is consistent with Foucault's ideas on examining the discourse for its surface appearances. As quoted in chapter one, Foucault states,

... taking the discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, (sic) we should look for its external conditions of existence.²³

CHAPTER 3

My Fair Lady - Goffman's Role Theory

There are many relationships that can be found in the musical My Fair Lady. Three relationships that utilize the role theory concepts of Irving Goffman are:

1. Henry Higgins & Eliza Doolittle - (Teacher/Pupil)
2. A.P. Doolittle and Eliza - (Father/Daughter)
3. Higgins, Eliza, Freddy Eynsford-Hill - (Love-hate/rivalry).

These relationships offer a diversity of role types and interaction that show a distinct separation between the primary lead types and secondary leads. For example, the primary male lead is Henry Higgins, an educated language professor, well to do and from an upper class family. The primary female lead, Eliza Doolittle, starts out at the beginning of the play as a flower-selling, street smart girl (a seemingly typical second-lead type) who turns into a society mistress who evolves into her primary lead status based on her relationship with Higgins. Eliza attains her society status through the acquisition of language skills and education which elevates her lead status from secondary to primary.

Based on observing the interaction between these two diverse character/role types, the actors playing these roles can see the separation between the lead types. The actors portraying these roles can begin to develop an understanding of the function and relationship that second lead has as it pertains to that of the primary lead and other lead levels within the play.

1. Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle

Teacher/Pupil

Act one, scene i:

Professor Higgins and Eliza have a unique relationship from the very beginning of the play. The initial meeting of these two involves a study undertaken by Higgins concerning language and accents. Their relationship evolves into a teacher/pupil relationship based on each of their own "role enactments" which occurs between one another. These role enactments, as defined by Goffman, stem from the face-to-face social interaction which occurs between them.²⁴ A role enactment is also seen as the actual conduct of a particular individual while on duty in his position.²⁵

The challenges are for Eliza to better herself through language acquisition and for Higgins to win a wager with his colleague, Colonel Pickering. The bet is to pass Eliza off as a duchess at the upcoming Embassy Ball within six months time. The challenges presented in each character's life become the social norms that they must live by. The

normative demands that are established for these characters are put forth in the drama so that they may proceed to meet those challenges.

These norms fluctuate throughout the play. The end result is that a situation of near chaos ensues. Goffman states that, the "function of a role is the part it plays in the maintenance or destruction of the system or pattern as a whole."²⁶ An example of this is the part Eliza's role plays in the development of her lead character type. Eliza's entire situation in life has always been, up to this point, one of survival, struggle and hard work. Eliza has grown up in Lisson Grove, a poor section of London, where she has had to struggle to survive. Without this background and the establishment of the norms by which Eliza has had to deal with, her character (or at least her lead-character status) would not exist in this play. The systems or patterns would be entirely different and therefore the story would take on a different meaning.

Because of Eliza's initial second-lead role status, the character of Higgins (as a primary lead role type), looks upon her as being nothing more than another test subject for his studies. Eliza, at this point in the play, is the typical second-lead type because she epitomizes the image of poverty, lower-class status and social placement that she grew up with. The unique thing about her character lead status is that it changes, but not until she gains knowledge

and language skills. Eliza is the same person deep down inside, but her character status changes.

This would indicate that lead status is determined by social standing. As seen in the analysis of Sweeney Todd in Chapter Four, this is not the case. What determines the lead status is the relationships of dominance that exist between character types, be they upper class or lower class "types." Once those relationships are established and the patterns of dominance are revealed by careful analysis, the lead status can be determined.

The relationship between Eliza and Higgins depends on certain patterns, or systems arising out of the interaction that takes place between the two. Initially, the patterns are very clear where social class and behavior are concerned. Higgins speaks to Eliza as if she were (as she appears to be) a "common guttersnipe." Higgins' first opinion of Eliza's social standing, aside from her obvious appearance, is seen in his first song "Why Can't the English?." The lyrics set the tone for the function of his own role in the play for example:

HIGGINS

I ask you, sir, what sort of word is that?
It's "Aooow" and "Garn" that keep her in her
place.
Not her wretched clothes and dirty face.
Why can't the English teach their children how to
speak?
This verbal class distinction by now should
be antique.

If you spoke as she does, sir,
Instead of the way you do,
Why, you might be selling flowers, too²⁷

Higgins is an eccentric English professor who takes apparent delight in tormenting Eliza. His reactions to her mispronunciations and "murdering" of the English language are his character's way of establishing the role expectations of Henry Higgins, professor. The actions he takes against Eliza are actions he would perform in any similar situation given the same circumstances. These actions are the type of actions and expectations that all other characters in the play have of him. These must be recognized in order for the actors to be able to properly act and react to Higgins' character.

For example, the actor who portrays Col. Pickering must be aware of how Higgins feels about him, knowing for example that their relationship stems from a mutual interest in language and accents. Their meeting one another begins by chance through the common thread of meeting Eliza on the street in front of the opera house. Pickering happens to be in town to meet with Higgins and is invited by Higgins to stay with him at his home out of professional courtesy and their mutual interest in language dialects. With language as a common social bond, that bond becomes even stronger when Eliza shows up on Higgins front door step the very next day and insists that Higgins teach her to speak "loik a laidy."

At first, Higgins reacts as one might expect him to, insisting that she be thrown out as he has plenty of audio recordings of the "Lisson Grove lingo" already in his library. When Eliza offers to pay for her lessons, "rightfully so," Higgins agrees to accept the challenge, not by taking her money, but by agreeing to a wager with Pickering that he can transform her into a duchess for the upcoming Embassy ball. Pickering's expectations are that Higgins cannot transform Eliza convincingly enough to pass her off as a duchess. Higgins' response is to accept this as his personal challenge, and to see to it that he succeeds.

The relationship between Higgins and Eliza immediately changes from the moment he accepts the challenge to teach her and when she agrees to be his student. Prior to this moment, their relationship was simply "observer and the observed." Their relationship has now been established as Teacher/Pupil.

Socially, Eliza becomes transformed by Higgins' offer of luxurious surroundings and the finest clothes. She has been taken from her social position as street vendor and placed in a world that is strange and frightening for her. It is obvious that this is Eliza's only chance to make it in this world. Turn this offer down, and she will never realize her dream to become a respectable flower shop proprietress. By accepting her challenge, the character of

Eliza is strengthened; putting aside her pride, she stands to triumph. Goffman illustrates this point when he states:

An individual's position, defining position as it tends to be used, is a matter of life chances: the likelihood of his undergoing certain fateful experiences, certain trials, tribulations and triumphs.²⁸

The moment Eliza accepts Higgins' offer and allows education and knowledge to assist her in her transformation, she becomes a major figure in the play. Knowledge becomes the ingredient realized by Eliza to achieve social status and is a central ingredient to the elements that make up her primary female lead stature.

The relationship between Higgins and Eliza maintains one of teacher/pupil throughout the play. This is important to understand because this type of relationship is Higgins' only system of power domination over Eliza. Higgins' own insecurities as a man act as his downfall and eventually act as the one thing that Eliza comes close to using in order to end their relationship. It is Eliza's sensitivity and honesty and Higgins' endearing quirkiness that, ironically, solidifies their relationship. Dramatically, this tension must exist between the two characters in order to sustain the relationship of teacher/pupil. Paul Hare states:

... the common theme in all situations is that every dramatic situation springs from a conflict between two principle directions of effort.²⁹

2. A.P. Doolittle and Eliza Doolittle

Father/Daughter

Act two, scene iii:

A different type of relationship exists between Eliza and her father, A.P. Doolittle. The mutual bond of daughter/father exists as a given dramatic situation in order to create a relationship uniquely different from that between Eliza and Higgins.

The unusual aspect of the relationship between Eliza and her father is that both characters start out as second-lead types but that Eliza becomes a primary lead and Doolittle does not. This situation occurs because Eliza acquires knowledge and language skills which enable her to triumph over poverty and her surroundings. Doolittle fails to acquire knowledge of the kind that could elevate his position in society.

Within the play, the playwright uses this element of social standing to make a comment about society in a comedic manner. At the end of the play, Doolittle becomes rich from speaking engagements given in America for speaking to "moral reform societies." The ironic thing about this situation is that Doolittle was put up to this by the very person who pretends to be espousing the virtues of knowledge and language skill, Henry Higgins. Through his lack of eloquent speech and his flair for the simple thought, Doolittle is looked upon and rewarded handsomely by a wealthy American

philanthropist. Doolittle's role status as a common dustman changes dramatically. His new self, that of a rich man, could elevate him to primary lead stature, if wealth and prominence determines primary lead character. The thing that prevents Doolittle from becoming a primary lead is his inability to accept the change and make the total transformation necessary to accept his new position in society, thus, achieving total dominance with his new-found wealth and status.

The society in which this formula is to be utilized is found in the particular society in which the play takes place. For different plays, such as Sweeney Todd, the society that becomes the model is the one found within the text itself. This is important to understand in order to place each comparison within its own context, and not to confuse a literal translation of the formula to mean social standing = primary lead status. There are, of course, variables to any equation and certain limitations to any formula presented.

In reference to Doolittle's refusal to accept his new-found social standing, he sums it up nicely when he speaks to Eliza of his disdain for the "respectable":

He ruined me, that's all. Destroyed me happiness.
Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of
middle-class morality.

Why do you think I'm dressed up like a ruddy pall-
bearer? Your stepmother wants to marry me. Now
I'm respectable - she wants to be respectable.³⁰

Doolittle uses the word "respectable" as if it were a curse. Goodlad clarifies the type of situation presented in this scene when he discusses any set or pair of role types that conflict by stating:

When any pair of roles - basic, general, independent - conflict sharply with each other, society may benefit from ceremony that requires the parties to change places for a while.³¹

Society, in fact, benefits from this change of place. For the purpose of this analogy, "society" means the audience and the characters within the play in which Doolittle's life interacts. The benefit for the audience is that they can relate to this comic situation that is presented. The audience, generally speaking, knowing these situations to be make-believe, feels deep down inside that they wish this type of thing would happen to them. It is a positive and natural reaction to a situation that is obviously not natural and in fact, is merely an illusion.

A. Paul Hare states:

The main difference between theater and ordinary life would seem to be that in theater, no matter how real or imagined are the relationships between the actors who mount the stage, their main intention is to transmit an "illusion" to the audience.³²

For the characters in the play, there is no real benefit from this change, except for Doolittle's drinking pals who encourage Doolittle to carry on as if nothing has happened. Doolittle will always be himself, because of the

fact that he has things money just can not buy, friends and pride.

In the end, Doolittle remains a second-lead type, even though in his bank account, he appears to have obtained primary lead stature. It is because he retains his lower-class values and educational standing that he stays at the second-lead level. This is also due to the fact that Doolittle's character interaction with the other lead types in the play is limited. As evidenced in the line count and song count quantification of his character, Doolittle remains a second lead.

Eliza's relationship to her father however, does not change her status as a lead character. Through her education and relationship with Higgins, she now has the tools to understand and communicate on the same social level as Higgins. Because she came from the social background that she did, Eliza has that special power of "the know" concerning her people and will always have that to add to her character. Doolittle's advice to his daughter sums it up well when he says:

Don't you come home to me.
Don't you take a tuppence from me.
You stand up on your own two feet.
You're a lady now and you can do it.³³

3. Eliza, Higgins and Freddy Eynsford-Hill

Love/Hate/Rivalry

Act one, scene vii:

Eliza meets Freddy at the very beginning of the play. Freddy and his mother have just come through the crowd after seeing the opera, in search of a taxi. Amidst the hustle and tussle, Freddy accidentally knocks Eliza down, causing her to spill her flower baskets. The apparently innocent meeting sets up the subsequent meeting of Freddy and Eliza later in the play in scene seven, the Ascot scene.

This meeting serves to set up the indication of separation of classes between Freddy and Eliza. It allows the text to build towards the moment in scene seven, where Freddy falls for Eliza, thinking she is a member of the upper-crust society that he lives in. The text has determined that Eliza's education and new language skills will camouflage her past and places her immediately into a society that she previously had never known.

One particularly ironic thing that occurs with the utilization of certain actions within the text is that Eliza's attempts to use her new found knowledge almost backfires, revealing her for what she really is. Freddy, on the other hand, finds Eliza's mispronunciations and colloquialisms something new and endearing and immediately falls for her. The actor must remember that this is the same Freddy seen at the beginning of the play and the same

Eliza as well. In reality, they have not changed socially. Eliza is still a common flower seller pretending to be an upper-class society miss and Freddy is the same upper-class dimwit pretending to admire the "new small talk" of the lower-class. The ironic thing is that the upper-class types who are at the Ascot, consider Eliza's "mastery" of the common tongue to be a triumph for "their own kind." The idea that Eliza knows something they do not is a powerful thing, even though her own naivete does not make this moment one of self-realization.

In this scene, Eliza's acquisition of language skills and Freddy's endearment towards her occur because of the structuring of the text and actions within the text, guiding the characters towards their own destiny. Because of the spacial separation between scenes one and seven, Eliza's acquisition of knowledge is allowed to take place, therefore giving her transformation some validity, even though Higgins is quite nervous at being revealed at this stage of her education.

Here is an example of the dialogue interaction within act one, scene vii:

FREDDY

The first race was very exciting, Miss Doolittle. I'm so sorry you missed it.

MRS HIGGINS (Hurriedly)

Will it rain do you think?

ELIZA

The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain.

(Higgins irresistibly does a quick fandango step which is so bizarre that the others have nothing to do but pretend it didn't happen)

ELIZA (continuing on)

But in Hertford, Hereford and Hamphsire hurricanes hardly ever happen.

FREDDY

Ha, ha, how awfully funny.

ELIZA

What is wrong with that, young man?
I bet I got it right!

Eliza's efforts to communicate continue in this vein throughout the scene. The more she speaks, the more she endears herself to the Ascot crowd, namely Freddy and his mother, Mrs. Eynsford-Hill.

Another aspect of the relationship between Eliza, Higgins, and Freddy, is Freddy's amorous advances towards Eliza. Freddy's song, "On the Street Where you Live," is an endearing, melodic ballad used to serve as a break between scenes seven and eight. It is interesting to note because of the fact that it is one of the most famous songs from this show. The question is raised, however, as to why this song is sung by a second lead character, when it would seem natural for a primary lead character to sing it. Does the

fact that a song is famous, melodic and endearing require it to be sung by the primary lead characters? Apparently not.

Freddy's song is famous because of the fact that it is easy to hum, easy to remember, and has a beautiful melody. There are two specific song types that the second lead characteristically sings. They are the comedy song and the "I am" song.

"On the Street" is an "I am" song. The "I am" song establishes essential character traits that the audience needs to know in order to develop an understanding of that particular character. The audience senses Freddy's feelings for Eliza because the melody reveals a swelling upheaval of emotion and drama within the words and the music, arranged to embody both the musical and the dramatic.

Freddy must sing this song because, dramatically, his character needs this song to establish Freddy's character or purpose in the play. The ability of the composer to embody the dramatic essence of the character in the melody is a key element for the second lead to possess. Without this song, Freddy becomes much less of a character than he really is. His second-status, versus potential chorus stature, is established with this song.

According to Richard Kislan, professor of theater at Glassboro State College, New Jersey:

For the second lead, music specifically helps to represent character, emotion and events that help to develop the second lead. Music, combined with lyrics, provides the connotative support for the denotative meaning of words.³⁴

An example of the lyrics in "On the Street":

And oh! The towering feeling
Just to know somehow you are near!
The overpowering feeling
That any second you may suddenly appear!

People stop and stare, they don't bother me.
For there's nowhere else on earth that I would
rather be.
Let the time go by,
I won't care if I
Can be here on the street where you live.³⁵

The second aspect of this relationship creates Freddy's purpose as a character. He now becomes a rival to Higgins because he seeks the hand of Eliza. He cannot win her over because of Eliza's feelings towards Higgins. This is because her feelings towards Higgins are too far developed. Higgins, even though he may be hard to live with, is attracted to Eliza because she represents the one thing Higgins never has had before in a relationship, someone who truly understands him. Their relationship works because they both learn that it is not merely appearances that make a person, but that it is what is inside a person that truly counts.

The distinction between Higgins and Freddy as character lead types is distinguished by their roles within this particular society, that society being the play, My Fair

Lady. This dialogue interaction becomes what is loosely termed "societal elements," and involves examining the play as an entity within itself. The framework of this society is the "musical" which contains the music, lyrics and dialogue that represent that which is to be presented on stage to a theater going public. J.S.R. Goodlad indicates that drama's purpose is to "... sharpen the individual's consciousness of roles, thus his awareness of the structure of his society."³⁶

It therefore becomes the responsibility of the audience to reflect upon the roles that are portrayed on stage and choose for themselves those characters they wish to relate to. For some, Freddy might be the most important character of this musical. For others, Doolittle might be considered the primary lead of the play and Higgins and Eliza might be mere distractions. In Freddy's case, the sympathetic nature of his character and the song he sings might strike a chord in some audience member's heart, elevating his character to lead stature in that person's mind.

The thing for the actor to remember, to prevent this misunderstanding, is the fundamental aspect of Role Theory, and that is:

... the individual perceives the structure of his society through the roles he expects people to play; and that he identifies with his community by his choice of roles to play. Drama is, of course, entirely concerned with the artificial construction of roles.³⁷

The actor who recognizes this can then approach his/her own character and develop that character within the framework established for that character. After he/she recognizes the role his/her character is to play within the community (society or play), the actor can then work in a cohesive fashion with the other character types. It is vital for the development of the framework of the play that proper lead-role recognition by each character (primary or secondary) occurs. Without this cohesive framework, the structure fails. M.J. Levy sums this point up when speaking of the FUNCTION of a role:

The FUNCTION of a role is the part it plays in the maintenance or destruction of the system or pattern as a whole.³⁸

This aspect of role theory and the previous discussion on relationships of dominance can now be applied to a totally different type of musical to show another way at looking at the musical using these theories. As found in Chapter 4 of this thesis, Foucault and Goffman's theories are applied side by side to test the theories on Sweeney Todd, a different and contemporary piece of musical theater.

CHAPTER 4

Sweeney Todd - Foucault and Goffman

Relations of Dominance

and Role Theory

Sweeney Todd was written by Stephen Sondheim and first produced on March 1, 1979, at the Uris Theater, New York City. This study involves analyzing a play that is in direct contrast with My Fair Lady to show the actor of musical theater that the theories presented in this paper can be universally applied. The approach in this chapter will combine the theoretical analysis of Foucault and Goffman to indicate that the actor/actress can utilize either theory simultaneously and, therefore, create choices to be made when doing character analysis in this genre. The purpose is two-fold; one, to perform character/lead-type analysis using two contrasting theories and two, to then decide, based on the findings, which theory works for the individual.

Sweeney opens up with the background of mid-19th century Fleet Street London, England, in the far distance and a large drop painted with a honeycomb motif depicting the class system in effect during that era.

This is a play that deals with relationships found between the various class structures during this period in history. The social types considered to have powerful positions in this society like the Judge and the Beadle are depicted in a negative manner, pitting man against man. In comparison, My Fair Lady depicts the upper class with honor and esteem, using the lower class societal levels as a comedic device to depict the conflict that naturally occurs between the classes.

Sweeney is a study in contrasts and domination. It depicts the lower classes feeding off of the power that has been forced upon them by the rich and the tyrannical.

Foucault has this to say concerning the study of domination between institutions:

We must escape from the limited field of juridical sovereignty and State institutions, and instead base our analysis of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination.³⁹

As found in My Fair Lady, class systems are thought of as containing the powerful and rich at the top of the system working its way down to the "lower class" levels. Sweeney is a musical that takes this structure of domination and reverses the class system to show power and domination to be asserted by the lower classes. The lower class characters in Sweeney assert their power simply in order to survive the domination brought down upon them by the rich and the tyrannical. Judge Turpin and his under-sheriff, Beadle

Bamford, represent this faction of the upper class. The one thing that brought these two to power, education and money, serves as the central item that eventually brings them down.

The power asserted by the lower class in this play comes from their societal need that their class status change. This is to assure that their best interests in that society are served. The lower class characters' lives are focused upon as the central subject of the musical, with the characters of Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett being the center of that focus. The dramatic intrigues that follow serve as the locus of their attempts to dominate and assert power over the Judge and what he represents.

Foucault also offers the following observation, which serves as a model to establish this idea of a structured grouping of power exercised through the struggle between the classes:

Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power⁴⁰

There are several patterns that result from the many relationships found in Sweeney. These patterns indicate that the musical's dramatic structure, and the individuals that make up the structure, needs these web-like patterns to exist in order for the various relationships of dominance to function.

The key point, as stated previously in chapter 1, is Foucault's key theoretical statement that the "individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application."⁴¹

He continues on this same thought when he states:

... the individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.⁴²

The "net-like" organization that occurs in Sweeney is a combination of upper and lower class levels that serve to interact upon one another. Each class is dependent upon one another for its very existence. For example, the relationship (Goffman's approach) found between Judge Turpin and his assistant Beadle Bamford is one of dictator and henchman. As they relate to the rest of the cast, these characters represent individuals who assert their power in a ruthless and unjust manner.

Turpin uses Beadle to reign over everyone and anyone who stands in his way. The judge is a tyrannical, power hungry and sexually perverted man who would sentence a man to death for stealing a piece of bread:

JUDGE

This is the fourth time, sir, that you have been brought before this bench. Though it is my earnest wish ever to temper justice with mercy, your persistent dedication to a life of crime is such an abomination before God and man that I have no alternative but to sentence you to hang by the neck until you are dead. Court adjourned.⁴³

The patterns established in Sweeney stem from relationships of power and domination between the classes. These are the same patterns that are discussed by Goffman who advises that the individual in any society is involved in one or more relationships and that those relationships become the patterns by which role is established. The interaction that occurs between the classes, and thus the "society of the play," create the conflict that is the basis of all drama.

The existence of relationships of power depends on the interaction and circulation of individuals within this so-called "net-like" structure. The point of this observation is to examine the interaction between lead and second lead types as well as to see which patterns develop amongst the myriad of relationships that exist.

It is interesting to note that of all the characters in the play, Sweeney is the only one who interacts with all of the others in one way or the other. This network of relationships is totally dependent upon the assertion of power and influence that Sweeney possesses in this play. Based on Goffman's theory of role enactment; as stated in chapter one, in order for Sweeney to function as the primary lead, his character must involve himself in a cycle of face-to-face interaction with his "role others," those characters in the rest of the cast on which his character is dependent for existence as the primary lead.

When applying these theories to an analysis of Sweeney Todd, the actor must recognize the complexity of the relationships by looking at the effect these relationships have upon one another. Judge Turpin asserts his power over others through intimidation and corruption. Sweeney asserts his power over others through his deeds of revenge and his own insanity.

The destruction of Turpin comes about by the hand of Sweeney. Sweeney eventually is able to lure Turpin to his barber shop at the end of the play ironically by using the one thing both of them hold dear to their hearts, Johanna, Sweeney's daughter.

The circumstances behind Sweeney's revenge are somewhat justified and understood by the audience, and it is almost as if the audience is in full support of his demonic behavior. For example, Sweeney, whose wife was raped by the Judge and whose daughter was taken by the Judge, was sentenced to fifteen years in prison in Australia by Turpin, based on false charges. Common sensibility allows the audience to separate right from wrong, but it is the power of the character and the text behind the character that motivates and supports his actions.

Turpin's demise, if analyzed for its textual context, occurs as a result of abusing his power over those he has persecuted. Throughout the play, Turpin's abuses become the power and the motive for Todd to justify his insanity.

Sweeney's insanity and his murdering of innocent victims who happen upon his shop is somehow justified, through the text itself, as it serves a dramatic purpose for the existence of Mrs. Lovett. Mrs. Lovett, the pie shop owner who has feelings for Sweeney, comes to depend on the victims of Sweeney's razor in order to sustain her business. This macabre twist does not seem so strange when the purpose of her existence as the female lead character is analyzed.

Lovett is the primary female character lead in the play. This occurs because of the relationship that is developed between herself and Sweeney. She represents Sweeney's "love-interest" when she convinces him that his wife Lucy, whom he has come home from prison to be with, has been dead a long time. Lovett's intentions are purely selfish because she knows that Lucy is not dead and in fact is really the character the audience regards as the "Beggar woman" seen throughout the play. The audience is kept from this secret until the very end of the play when Sweeney is forced to kill the beggar woman and tragically discovers who she really is.

Lovett's status as the primary female lead occurs because she is the central focus of actions that occur in the pie shop scenes and because of her relationship with Todd. Tied in with the action of the barber shop above her pie shop, she teams up with Sweeney to act as part of the total dramatic focus.

Lovett sings the majority of the songs in the show, most of them storytelling songs which depict story line and focus towards justification of their bizarre existence. The music in Sweeney reinforces dramatic action. It initiates, heightens, and reinforces movement of story and character and sets up direct metaphors that contribute to the dramatic theme. What occurs in the score also occurs on stage, combining music and drama for optimum effect. Music plays an important function in Sweeney. Sweeney is a musical that borders on the operatic with its blending of text and song, with very little spoken word. What is spoken is underscored and serves as a transitional device to facilitate scene changes.

The music in "The Worst Pies in London" is an example of music and dialogue created in a complex mixture of syncopated poetry. Scattered with a melodic undertone, "Worst pies" is Lovett's central "I am" song which sets up her character's role status and purpose in the show. An example of some of the lyrics:

LOVETT

Animals
 Wot are dying in the street.
 Mrs. Mooney has a pishop,
 Does a business, but I notice something wierd -
 Lately all her neighbor's cats have disappeared.
 Have to hand it to her -
 Wot I calls
 Enterprise,
 Popping pussies into pies.⁴⁴

The metaphors established in this song and others, like "By the Sea," act as story telling/character revealing songs for Lovett. This allows her character to reveal its purpose and intentions directly through song and lyrics, not merely action. The telling of story and character is found in any musical. The important thing to remember is that Lovett's character, if it is to survive as the primary female lead, must have these types of songs within the text, and the large number of songs sung also must carry equal force, importance or focus than her counterpart, Sweeney.

Since Sweeney is a combination of dialogue and music, the plotting out of quantitative data required a different approach than that taken in the quantitative analysis of My Fair Lady. Instead of taking one separate scene and counting the dialogue and songs sung, as done in My Fair Lady, the transitions in Sweeney are more difficult to discover, thus making a total tabulation necessary. This method of counting can be done for My Fair Lady, when the actor is examining the play in its entirety. Examples of the total line/dialogue count for My Fair Lady and Sweeney Todd can be found in the appendix.

The relationship between the servant boy, Tobias, and Mrs. Lovett is an interesting example of a master/servant type of relationship. Tobias' character interacts on this level throughout the play. In the beginning, he is seen as the servant-boy to Pirelli, a travelling salesman. Tobias'

function for both Lovett and Pirelli stands at the same level of purpose since both masters take advantage of him and exploit him for their own betterment. This points out that the lower classes can also turn on their own for self-serving purposes.

Because of the dual connection between Pirelli and Lovett, Tobias' function throughout the play is important. He serves as the through line, the one character who remains the same, innocent and brave. Ironically, it is Tobias, who finally goes insane and emerges as the successor to Sweeney's demonic ways. The carnage and the murder that he has unwittingly been a part of becomes his downfall.

In many relationships such as this one, there is a definite pattern of interdependency that exists. Tobias' character exists to serve Pirelli and Lovett. Lovett exists to serve Sweeney and Tobias, Sweeney to serve Lovett and Johanna, etc. These relationships are illustrated in the graph titled RELATIONSHIPS, found in the appendix. J.S.R. Goodlad, quoting from Goffman's Presentation of Self, states:

The more a role is inter-dependent with other roles the more likely it is to be distinguished by some outward sign that acts like a warning light to notify people that the person in question has special rights and obligations either in the immediate situation or in other relations in which the parties might be involved.

He continues,

Role signs are a means of communication
indicating the relationships in which someone
is prepared to interact with others.⁴⁵

In the beginning of the play, Pirelli is introduced by his servant-boy, Tobias, in the number, "Pirelli's Miracle Elixir." The lyrics to this song tell of a fast-talking, slick salesman named Pirelli who has "invented" and is selling a miracle elixir, "guaranteed" to cure baldness, and other ailments as well. An example of the lyrics in Tobias' song follows, indicating the colloquial feel for this song and giving the audience and actor an idea of what this character is about. He sings:

TOBIAS

'Twas Pirelli's
Miracle Elixir
That's wot did the trick, sir,
True, sir, true.
Was it quick, sir?
Did it in a tick, sir,
Just like an elixir
Ought to do!

(to 1st MAN)
How about a bottle, mister?
Only costs a penny, guaranteed.⁴⁶

This number acts as the "telling song" that sets up the confrontation between Sweeney and Pirelli. A contest to determine who can shave a man's face cleaner and faster than the other is set up. This contest is Sweeney's way of proving to the inhabitants of Fleet Street that he is, in

fact, the best barber in all of London, a device he uses to gain their trust.

Tobias' innocence allows him to be Pirelli's mark. Pirelli is a slick, dishonest salesman. When he is "unmatched" by Sweeney's superior skills in barbering, he leaves with Tobias, humiliated and five pounds short from losing the wager. Pirelli soon returns to Sweeney's shop above Mrs. Lovett's pie shop, to reclaim his five pounds and also to reveal himself as Daniel O'Higgins, a face from Sweeney's past. Pirelli threatens to reveal Sweeney for who he really is and threatens him with blackmail. Sweeney, sensing no way out, murders him and disposes Pirelli's body in a luggage trunk. Tobias, who has been sitting downstairs with Mrs. Lovett, enjoying her meat pies and a spot of gin, unwittingly becomes their shop assistant when he discovers that his master has "left him high and dry."

Because Tobias cannot fend for himself, he immediately attaches himself to Mrs. Lovett who represents a motherly and kind figure to him. As can be seen by the myriad of relationships that occur between just four characters, two lead types and two second leads, the result is a complex web of patterns which makes up the element of character types within the play.

Tobias, as a second lead character, has interacted with no fewer than three people within three scenes. Within that time span, Tobias has been the interactive nucleus between

Pirelli, Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett. Tobias' existence as a second lead has a direct bearing on the paths that the other characters will take in the course of the play.

Tobias' character has a distinct role-pattern and function within this society (remembering the society being that of Sweeney Todd, the play). His pattern is a linear one which interacts upon only those that serve to benefit from his service to them. Tobias' function as a second lead is determined by the activity of pre-determined situations within the text and the normative elements established in the context of the role assumptions that his character (servant-type) possesses. Tobias must act as the servant to those who assert power and control over him. His reactions to the tasks he performs (innocence, exuberance, naivete, etc.) creates the actions by which his character must adhere to in order to survive. His function as narrator in song is an example of the normative/given expectations found in the text assigned to his particular character.

Tobias acts as the play's underlying narrator. His songs are evidence of this. Tobias sings "God That's Good!" in the opening number of Act Two. Instead of selling miracle elixirs, Tobias is now hawking Mrs. Lovett's meat pies. There is a direct parallel that can be drawn between Tobias' function for Pirelli and the relationship he now has with Lovett and Sweeney. That parallel, unwittingly selling

fraudulent products for his master, exists because of Tobias' role status as servant.

Knowing information about Tobias through the songs he sings and dialogue he has with the other characters helps the actor of this part to:

... define the situation, enabling others (audience and characters) to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him.⁴⁷

The "desired response" is the interaction that takes place as a result of Tobias' relationship with the other characters in the play. If Tobias did not interact with the others in the manner that he does, his character would be considered minor and possibly be delegated to chorus status, where he would serve an entirely different function altogether.

Because of the depth in which Tobias' character interacts upon the text in the songs he sings and the relationships he maintains with Sweeney and Lovett, his status as second lead character changes at the end of the play. Locked away in the pie shop's dungeon-like basement where Todd's victims are ground up and incinerated, Tobias is driven mad. At the play's climax, Sweeney has just murdered his wife (unknowingly), the Judge, the Beadle, and Mrs. Lovett. Tobias rises from the grave-like cellar to discover the carnage that has been wrought and finds

Sweeney's bloody razor lying on the floor next to Sweeney. His hair turned ashen-white and his facial features that of an old man, he says:

TOBIAS (madly)

Razor! Razor! Cut, cut, cut cadougan, watch me grind my corn. Pat him and prick him and mark him with B, and put him in the oven for baby and me!

(Cuts TODD's throat. TODD dies across the body of LUCY as the factory whistle blows.)⁴⁸

Tobias becomes the play's metaphor to the life of Sweeney. He himself has been transformed by the brutality and shattering of his innocence. Tobias' awakening to the horrors and destruction that has occurred has elevated him to primary lead status only for a brief moment. Had the play continued on, he would sustain the status of primary lead. Since the play does not go on, the character of Tobias only senses total power and domination as a lead type. The fact remains, however, that his status as second lead is established and firmly entrenched amongst the other characters in the play.

The system of domination that is seen in Sweeney is a result of the forms of domination that are exercised within society itself. Sondheim has arranged the various relationships in such a way as to "create multiple forms of subjugation that have a place and function with the social organism."⁴⁹ Those multiple forms make up the systems that

function to sustain that social organism that exists within the play.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the function of the second lead character as it relates to the primary lead character type in the modern musical play. The initial purpose, as described in the proposal submitted to the graduate committee of the Theater Arts Department at San Jose State University, was to examine specific second-lead character types to determine their "importance" in relationship to primary lead character types in the musical.

The evolution of this paper has been a series of attempts at discussing the problems presented by the initial proposal and creating a coherent system of evaluation and theory which has resulted in this paper's present form. The study of the function of the second lead character type, using two differing opinions and theories as presented by Foucault and Goffman, developed after a long process of elimination and testing.

The actor who is cast in a musical play, at any lead level, can select from these theorists the method that works best for him/her. A chart at the end of this paper lists the key points of examination for each theory. The actor may choose to use the quantitative approach from the

theories of Foucault to examine the powers of domination that exist within the discourse/text. The other may choose to use Goffman's theories of role relationships, especially if the play deals heavily in character and relationships as many musicals do.

A combination of the two theorists can be used as well. As seen in the previous examination of Sweeney Todd, it is evident that both theories can be selected and utilized to develop an analysis of character lead status. The important thing that this paper hopes to develop is the understanding that each person has a multitude of choices to select from when studying character.

Since there are only so many primary lead roles in any given musical, most actors are going to find that the second lead characters are the parts that they are going to play. Using the theories presented, it is important to see that any approach towards understanding has to be worked out and given a specific application if its purpose and affect is to be realized.

In speaking of role relationships and the interaction that occurs on stage, Goffman states:

I shall use the term "role" as an equivalent to specialized capacity or function, understanding this to occur both in offstage, real life, and in its staged version.⁵⁰

Goffman equates the stage with real life; where the actions which occur on stage are a reflection of those actions which occur in life's un-staged version of reality.

Foucault equates knowledge with power. The acquisition of the former leads to the latter. Foucault speaks of the domination of others as an effect of the powers resultant from actions within a society governed by those who possess power and those who submit to it. Examples of these power relationships: Eliza and Higgins, Tobias and Pirelli, Judge Turpin and Sweeney, have been given in this paper and analyzed to illustrate how the establishment of text and character determines the dichotomy of knowledge and those that seek it. Another way of examining the musical has been presented: eliminating the textual aspect of the theater piece and examining patterns and symbols which represent those power relationships that occur within the text.

Eliza's search for knowledge leads her to an attainment of a higher class (and lead) level. Tobias' innocence and involvement with individuals who assert power over him drives him towards a tragic attainment of knowledge and power (the revealing of the evil deeds of Sweeney and Lovett), one that serves to destroy him.

Tobias' aspirations towards worlds that are outside his station enter into the world of the respectable and the sympathetic. The path that leads towards that respectability leads to the tragic with emotions buried in

the sympathetic consciousness of the audience. Tobias' character offers a spirit of compromise; the ability to see the human situation from more than one point of view, enabling the world to look at him more as a victim rather than a willing participant.

The relationships in My Fair Lady are typified by the attainment of education and knowledge. The action of the play, as stated before, focuses on the acquisition of language, therefore typifying Foucault's theories on knowledge and power. By analysis of the various levels of knowledge acquisition and the resultant relationships, My Fair Lady serves as an excellent example of Foucault's and Goffman's theories.

The same theories can apply to an analysis of Sweeney Todd, which indicates that these theories can be tested upon seemingly disparate works of theater. Since role relationships in Sweeney are also determined by societal attitudes, role disbursement and the effects of domination circulating within a particular society, their theories are timely and applicable. Foucault states:

Power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it.⁵¹

This approach towards analysis, as stated before, allows the actor to determine areas of focus he/she should select in determining the function of the lead character type that they may play.

The most significant aspect of these theories is that they have a universal application. The actor can apply either theory to the study of their own individual character in any given musical. Through either approach, role theory or text, the actor will be able to determine: (1) the lead status of the character they are portraying; (2) the function of that character in terms of primary lead or secondary lead; and (3) the textual relationship of that character with other characters in the musical.

ENDNOTES

¹ J.S.R. Goodlad, The Sociology of Popular Drama (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), p. 39.

² Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge - Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 98.

³ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Erving Goffman, Encounters - two studies in the sociology of interaction, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), p. 90.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 85-86.

¹⁰ A. Paul Hare, Social Interaction as Drama, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1985), p. 19.

¹¹ Goffman, Encounters, p. 93.

¹² Ibid., p. 85.

¹³ Goodlad, Sociology, p. 39.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, The Discourse of Language, (Appendix), translation of the author's L'ordre du Discours, (New York: Pantheon, 1971), p. 227.

- 15 My Fair Lady act one, scene i.
- 16 My Fair Lady act one, scene i.
- 17 My Fair Lady act one, scene i.
- 18 Foucault, Power, p. 99.
- 19 My Fair Lady act one, scene i.
- 20 Foucault, Power, p. 98.
- 21 My Fair Lady act one, scene ii.
- 22 My Fair Lady act one, scene ii.
- 23 Foucault, Discourse, p. 219.
- 24 Goffman, Encounters, p. 85.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 M. J. Levy Jr., The Structure of Society,
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), pp. 76.
- 27 My Fair Lady act one, scene i.
- 28 Goffman, Encounters, p. 92.
- 29 Hare, Social Interaction, p. 43.
- 30 My Fair Lady act two, scene iii.
- 31 Goodlad, Sociology, p. 38.
- 32 Hare, Social Interaction, p. 54.
- 33 My Fair Lady act two, scene iii.
- 34 Richard Kislán, The Musical - A look at the
American Musical Theater, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall,
1980), p. 205.
- 35 My Fair Lady act one, scene vii.
- 36 Goodlad, Sociology, p. 39.
- 37 Ibid.

38 M. J. Levy, Jr., The Structure of Society,
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 76.

39 Foucault, Discourse, p. 102.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., p. 98.

42 Ibid.

43 Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street act
one, scene vi.

44 Sweeney Todd act one, musical number 3.

45 Goodlad, Sociology, as quoted from Goffman's The
Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, (1971), p. 34.

46 Sweeney Todd act one, musical number 9.

47 Goodlad, Sociology, as quoted from Goffman's The
Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, (1971), p. 34.

48 Sweeney Todd act two, scene xii.

49 Foucault, Discourse, p. 96.

50 Erving Goffman, Frame Analysis - An essay on the
organization of experience, (New York: Harper & Row,
1974), p. 128.

51 Foucault, Discourse, p. 98.

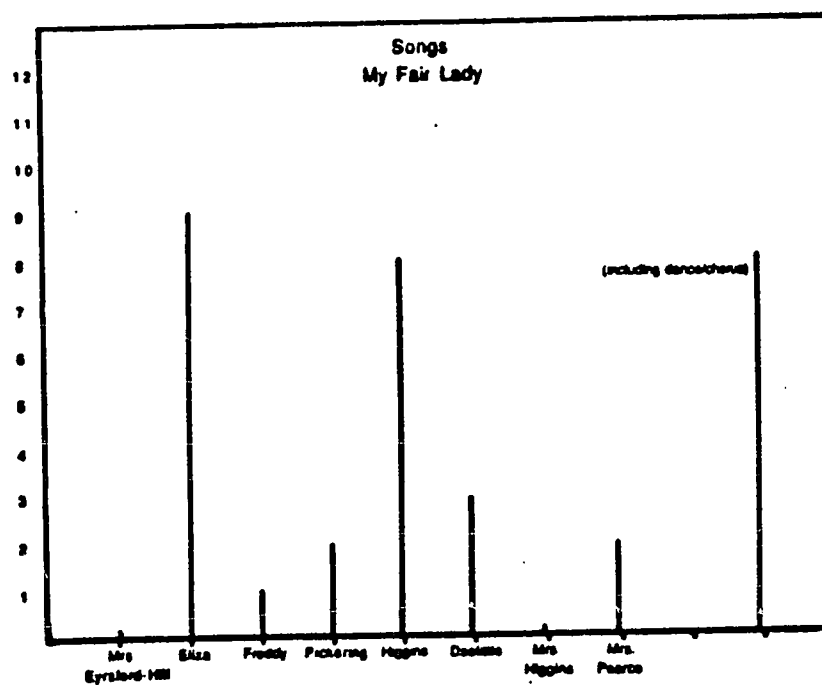
APPENDICES

Theory Comparison Chart

<u>FOUCAULT</u>	<u>GOFFMAN</u>
POWER/KNOWLEDGE:	ROLE THEORY:
Relations of Dominance	- Status
Individual as the vehicle of power	- Role Others - Sectors/Subroles
Language acquisition	Systems/Patterns
Text	Normative Elements
Power	Expectations
Discourse	Obligations
Values projected by language	Societal position
New Approaches	Function
Formal strategies	- eufunction - dysfunction

GRAPHS AND OVERLAYS

CHART #1

Songs Sung Per Character

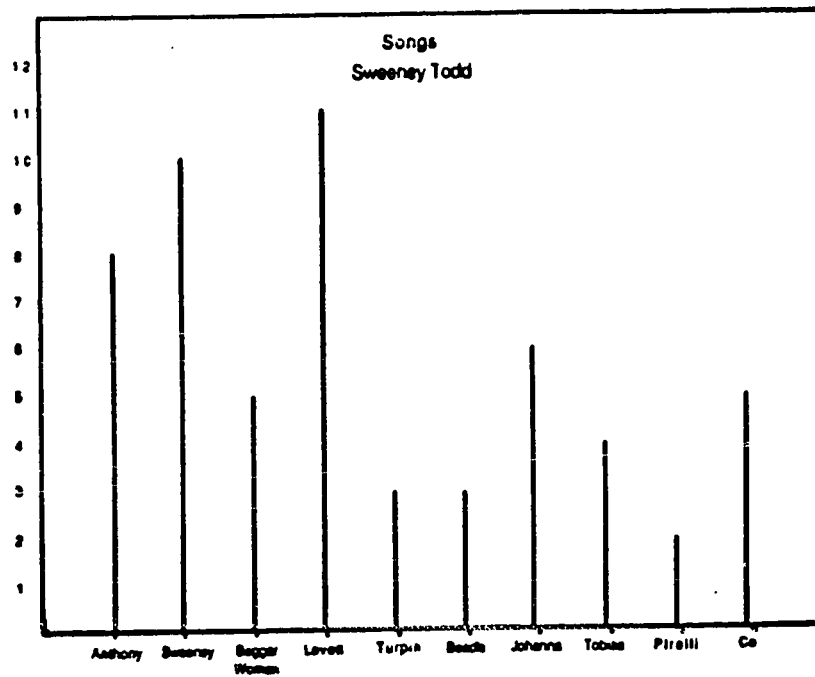
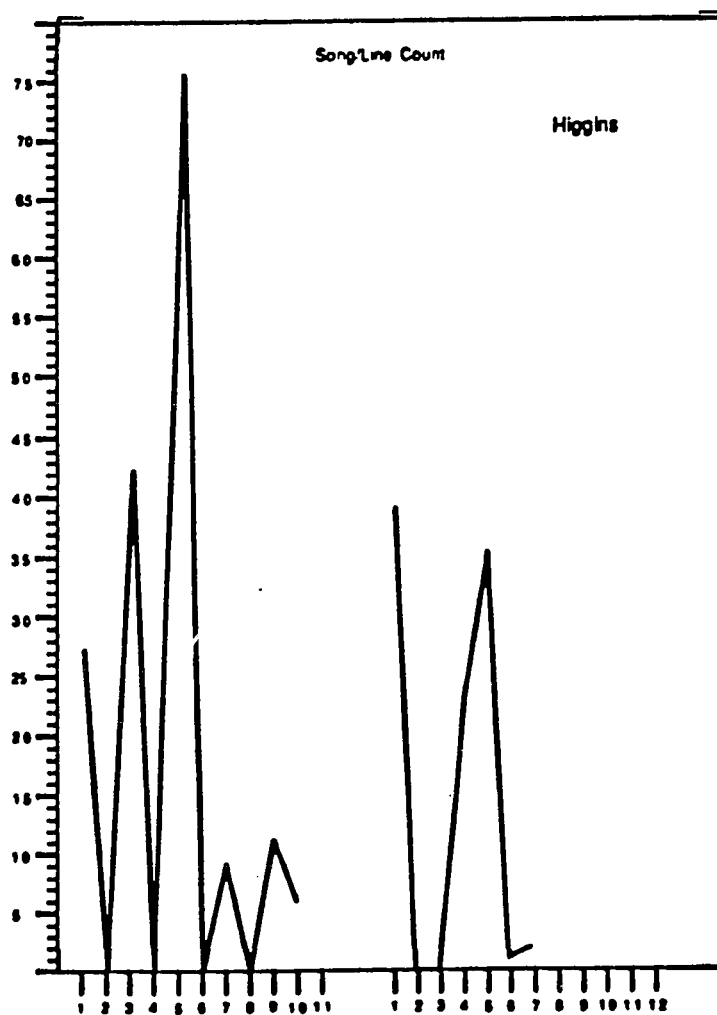
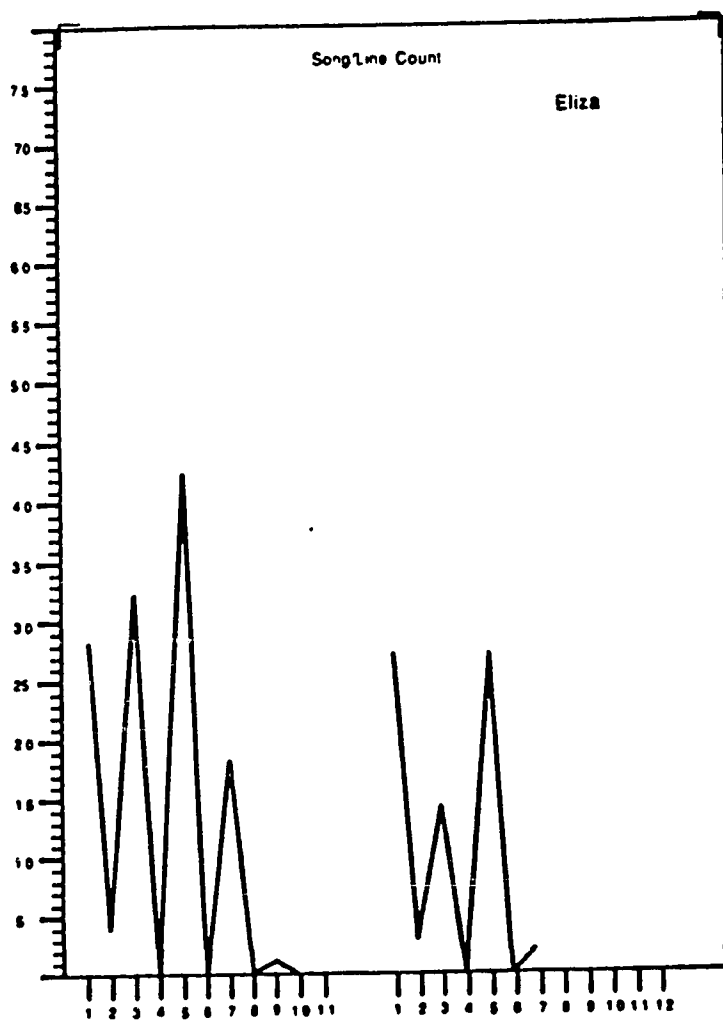
Songs Sung Per Character

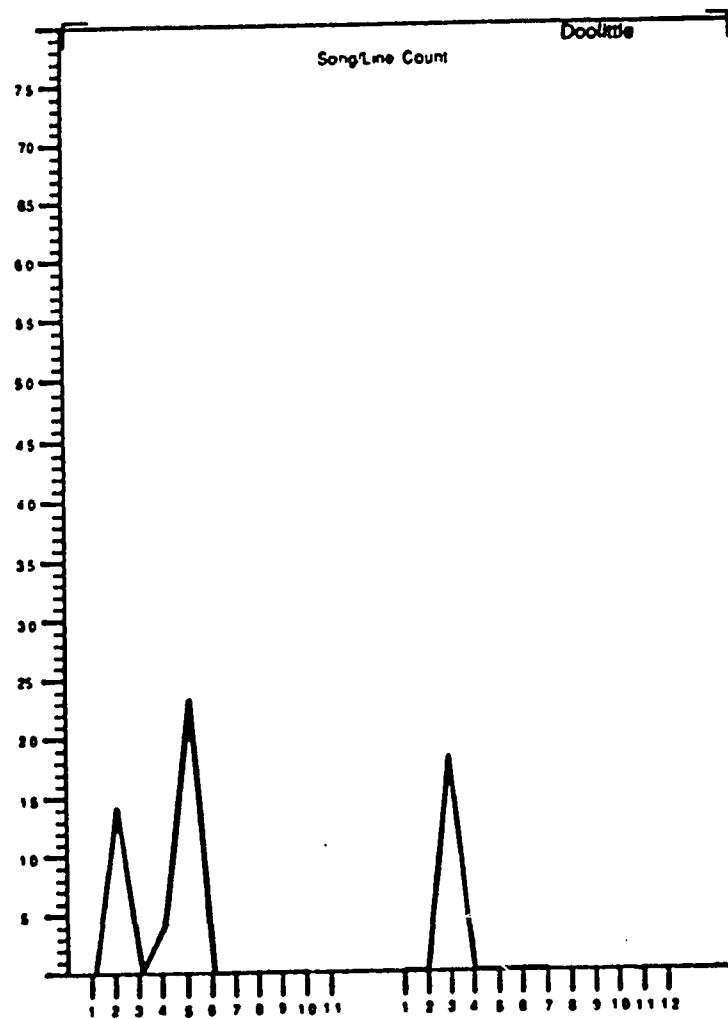
CHART #2

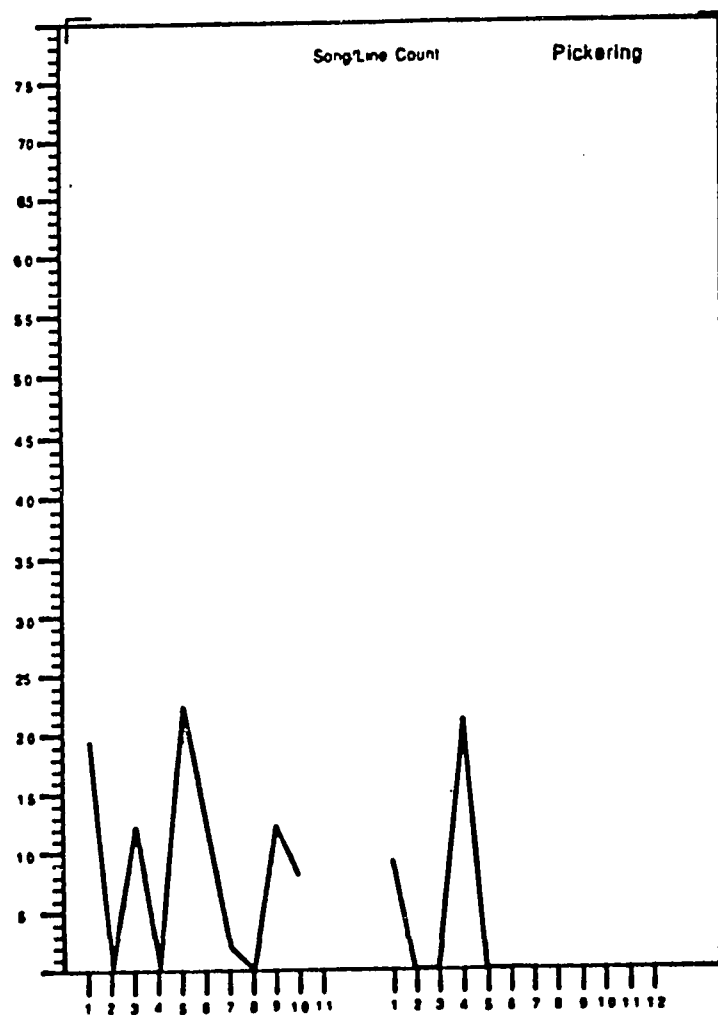
Pirelli		Enemy						Master	
Tobias		Servant		Servant					Servant
Johanna		Lover	Daughter	Daughter		Enemy	Enemy		
Beeds		Enemy	Enemy	Enemy	Enemy	Servant		Enemy	
Turpin		Enemy	Enemy	Enemy	Enemy		Master	Enemy	
Lovell		Partner	Rival			Enemy	Enemy		Master
Beggar Women		Wife		Rival	Enemy	Enemy		Mother	
Sweeney Todd		Friend		Husband	Partner	Enemy	Enemy	Father	Master
Anthony		Friend				Enemy	Enemy	Lover	

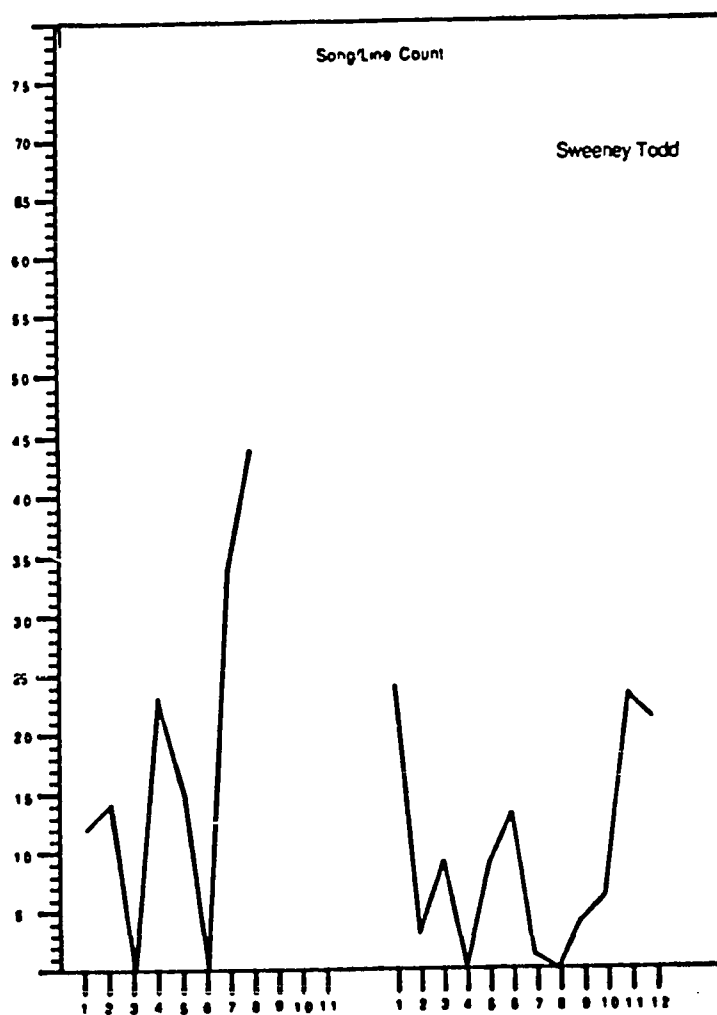
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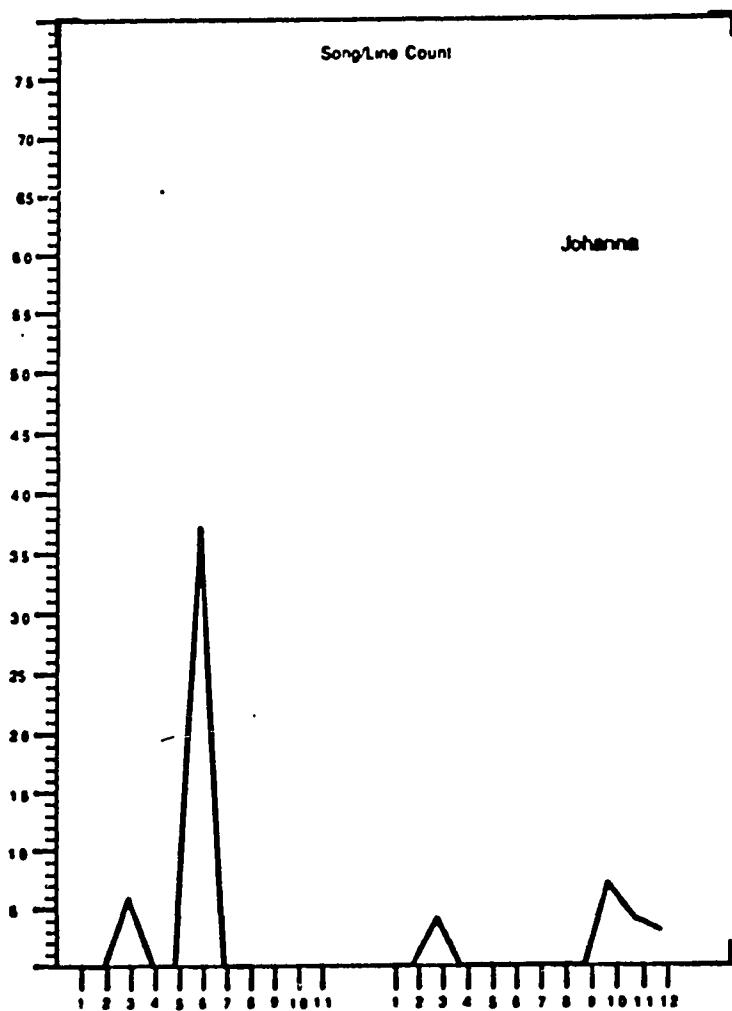
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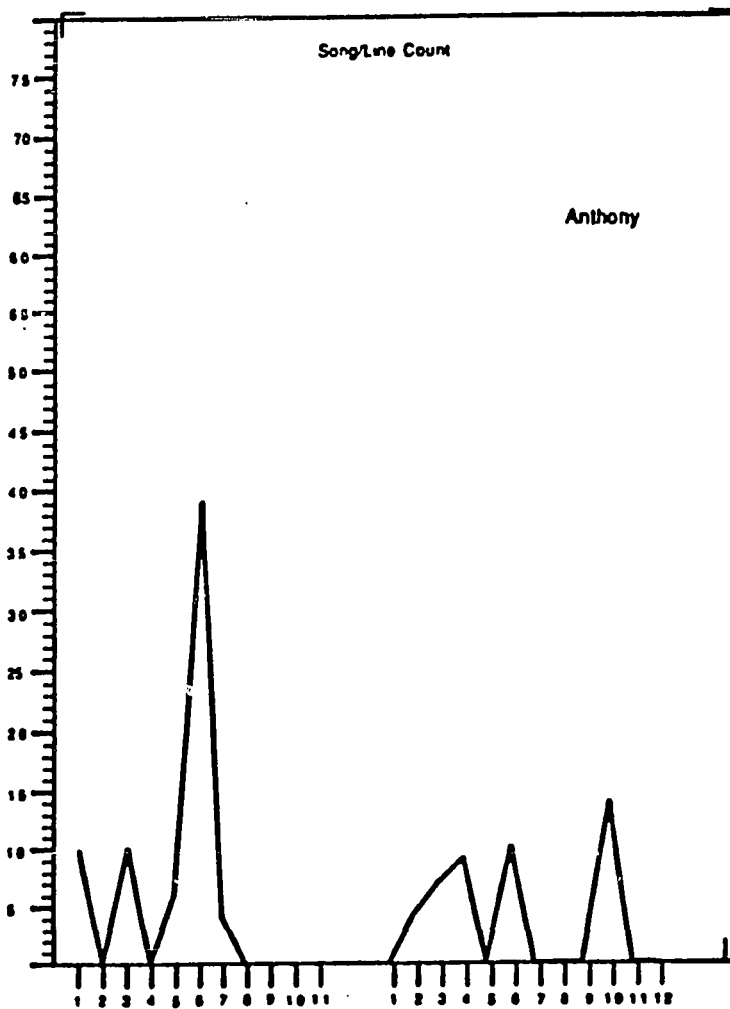
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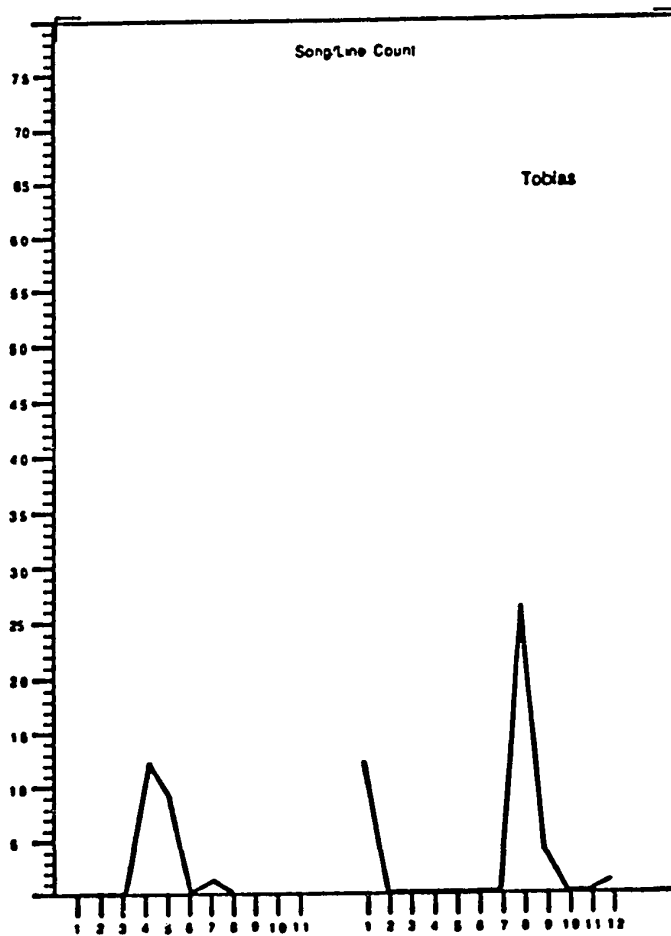
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